

## **WORKSHOP NOTES**

City of San Diego Park and Recreation Board  
**Balboa Park Committee**  
**June 18, 2008**

### **ATTENDANCE:**

#### **Members Present**

Jennifer Ayala  
Jerelyn Dilno  
Vicki Granowitz  
Andrew Kahng  
David Kinney  
Mike McDowell  
Michael Singleton  
Donald Steele

#### **Members Absent**

Mick Hager (Ex)  
Laurie Burgett(Ex)

#### **Staff Present**

Susan Lowery-Mendoza  
Bruce Martinez

### **Call to Order-**

David Kinney called the meeting to order at 5:34 pm. He announced that all of these meetings are free and that there are sign in sheets for public comment.

The House of Hospitality paid to bring speakers from St. Louis, Forest Park for this meeting. He gave an overview of what the Balboa Park Committee's assignment is with three questions. Can the City of San Diego provide the necessary financial support for Balboa Park in the future? If it can, should it? And If the City decides on a different type of governance than what is in place now, what are the options? One thing is for sure, there will be no privatization of Balboa Park.

David introduced Councilmember Toni Atkins and asked her if she wanted to say a few words. Councilmember Toni Atkins thanked the Balboa Park Committee for the work they do. She also thanked the Mayor's office staff and City TV. She reiterated that it is important to come to these meetings to give feedback. It is good to hear from others' experiences with different governance models. We need to look at this in a very optimistic manner. Balboa Park is unique and we will come up with something to help it remain in perpetuity.

### **Workshop Items -**

David Kinney added that public comment is a very crucial part to the decision making. He reminded everyone to fill out the public comment sign in sheets. David introduced Rob Hutsel.

Rob Hutsel – Executive Director of the San Dieguito River Valley Foundation

- Three people got together to see what they would do about oil spill
- They started from ground zero
- There were collaborations from 12 people
- How could they afford it?
- They learned a lot from the San Dieguito River Valley Conservancy, which is a unique model
- They dismissed JPA's
- 52 mile long river, so three municipalities had to get involved.
- It would take \$500 million

- Organize all partners
- They dealt with great people, such as Mike Nelson

Mike Nelson – Executive Director of the San Dieguito River Valley Conservancy

The real strength of their conservancy is their board, which includes the Mayor and Donna Frye. A Conservancy is a state project. It takes a lot of money to assess all the issues, when a strategic analysis was done in 2004, it was estimated there were \$164M in needs.

**#1 Question** – *How does the collaboration between the two agencies work?*

**Answer** – *It requires a real dedication to communication.*

**#2 Question** – *Do you two compete for funds?*

**Answer** – *Rarely*

**#3 Question** – *How was the vision of responsibility arrived?*

**Answer** – *Communication*

**#4 Question** – *What are lessons to be learned that can be shared with the Balboa Park Committee?*

**Answer** – *Not everything is perfect. Planning and letting it sit on a shelf. You need lots of people to make it happen. The foundation receives money from the conservancy. Model needs people and flexibility. These things are long term. Takes lots of people. Find a voice. Personal time and commitment. You need leaders that will be willing to spend the time. The model we have isn't perfect. Don't build an infrastructure that doesn't strive for perfection. We never thought we'd make it this far.*

Gary Bess – Forest Park, St. Louis

They have talked to a few groups already and he is happy to speak to the public because their opinions matter. They're the ones that use the park. San Diego has a great park. Forest Park is not here to tell us theirs is the right way.

Forest Park was established in 1876. It's a 1200 acre park and they have about 2.5 million visitors per year. There are only 400,000 people in St. Louis city. The land was purchased in 1874 and in 1904 they had the first fair to which 20 million people visited. There was a lot of uncontrolled change after the fair. In 1968 a plan was created, then again in 1990. In 1993 another plan was set and stakeholders joined and 17% of taxes went to the park. A board was put together and anything that was not on the plan was not done. The plan was amended once and it took 2 years to put everything together.

The first phase of the project was to raise \$86M. \$43M came from the city through various methods and the other \$43M came from Forest Park Forever (non-profit foundation which benefits only Forest Park).

James Mann – Forest Park Forever, St. Louis

The master plan is very important because there is always some suspicion about personal interest. The Foundation was founded in 1986 and it is completely separate from the city. The foundation exists as an advocate of the park. There are a number of agreements, including master funding agreements, but no privatization.

The city pays bills first and then the Foundation refunds the city. Some donors paid completely for some projects. Some times projects are added to existing ones to save time. The Foundation gets \$2M a year from their Hospital. They've encouraged donations by matching funds and offering some naming opportunities. A poll was taken and it went really well, River was buried underneath the park. List of

projects or all that was done. Major donors gave to everything. Talked about improvements that institutions made.

Park is divided in zones \$15M a year is spent just on maintenance. The park has many more visitors now and they are thrilled with the outcome.

David K. thanked the speakers and opened the floor for questions.

**#5 Question**– Regarding the allocations of the \$13M, are there specific projects that it goes to, and at what time do institutions give that money?

**Answer** – they give money but towards making capital improvements.

**#6 Question** – Sales Tax? Was that used to borrow \$20M?

**Answer** - Tax dollars are being used to pay that loan. Partnered with three other counties for tax dollars used to make trails that connect the counties.

**#7 Question**– Can you give a breakdown of Forest Park users?

**Answer** - Very similar to Balboa Park. 50/50.

TOT – hotel tax does not fund the park. No net loss green space? First thing was to agree on master plan. Institutional groups wanted more land. Environmentalists wanted to maintain green. If institutions need more space then hard space should be taken down not green space.

**#8 Question**– Is there any donor fatigue?

**Answer** – Last \$10M was given without approaching any donor.

Public Comment #1 – Jay Hoffman

Thank you to all. This is all very informative. How do people get to the park?

Answer by Gary Bess: There is enough parking but not in the same spot. Parking was placed between institutions. It is hard to allow no more growth in their park.

Public Comment #2 – John Lomack

If \$15M is all that is needed for maintenance of a zone, \$80M is a lot of money to just sit there. The city doesn't do pretty stuff really well, so they leave it up to the institution to fund projects that are part of the master plan. There is no political interest in tax increase, so they have continued looking at options.

Public Comment #3 – San Diego Historical Society

St. Louis may own some of the buildings; others are leased to the city as is for Institutions funded by City tax. Zoo's budget – tax covers 40% of it. Zoo makes a yearly contribution of \$125,000.

It works if you get the money. Advance with the conservancy but also enhance the historical part of it.

Gary & Jim – Fair of 2004, Centennial event in 2015, was it leveraged?

Focus was on restoring the park. That was a more important legacy.

State audit caused the public private separation.

Donating to Government? It is hard. He doesn't care where the money comes from.

Money is not subject to appropriation by putting it in a trust.

Chairperson Granowitz: The Soul of San Diego only covered Park Districts created by a vote of people within the area that would be subject to the assessment. It is clear from what you are describing the San Diego River District was created by a different mechanism. Is the state creating more of these kinds of districts? Does state funding come with this type of district?

CA Senator Kehoe sponsored the bill that was passed to create the district and it can with funding. A conservancy has jurisdictional boundary half a mile outside of river. Foundation has more land because of historical value. They have had an angel, Senator Kehoe. There are also others that have helped. Getting more state funds in this budget will be challenging.

#9 Question - Looking at budget constraints, do you expect less revenue coming in?

Answer – Yes

Forest Park – 20 staff (6 administrative/fundraising)

#10 Question # - When looking back at early years, what was overlooked?

Answer - It is a hard concept to understand why the government had to still be involved. Helping the public understand the partnership between the foundation and the city was what they overlooked.

David Kinney thanked everyone for attending the meeting.

Next meeting will be on Thursday, July 24<sup>th</sup> and we will be discussing Balboa Park Leases and contracts.

*The meeting continued with rest of the items on the agenda.*

*-Notes submitted by Vanessa Nieves*